

# THE BEACON



**Nebraska Emergency Management Agency**

SEPTEMBER, 2004

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Volunteers from Nemaha and Richardson Counties got some hands-on reception and care training recently.

# SEPTEMBER IS NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH

## ***National Kick-off by Secretary Ridge on Sept. 9, Nebraska Ceremony Set for 1:30 P.M. Sept. 9***

Thursday, September 9th is the day that has been earmarked for official activities launching "National Preparedness Month", both in Nebraska and nationwide.

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge will preside over the events at the United States Capitol on that day, and all 56 state and territorial governors have pledged to mark National Preparedness Month with local events.

In Nebraska, the launch will occur at 1:30 at the Nebraska National Guard airbase, as Governor Mike Johanns, Lt. Governor Dave Heineman and representatives of emergency management and first responder agencies from around the state will kick off the month.

As part of the event, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency will turn over 29 decontamination trailers to local jurisdictions. The trailers were purchased with Department of Homeland Security 2002 equipment grant funds, and will provide needed capabilities to local jurisdictions across the state of Nebraska.

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"National Preparedness Month brings together an amazing coalition of partners to make citizen preparedness a priority for every city, every neighborhood and every home across America."

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge.

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Nationally, The U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS), The America Prepared Campaign, the American Red Cross, the National Association of Broadcasters and the U.S. Department of Education have joined a coalition of more than 50 national organizations to engage Americans in emergency preparedness by launching National Preparedness Month on September 9.

The launch event at the United States Capitol is co-chaired by Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Joseph Lieberman (D-CT) and Representatives Christopher Cox (R-CA) and Jane Harman (D-CA). In addition, all 56 state and territorial governors have pledged to mark National Preparedness Month with local events.

For more information about National Preparedness Month, visit the Department of Homeland Security website at <http://www.dhs.gov>.

## **MODULAR EMERGENCY RESPONSE RADIOLOGICAL TRANSPORTATION TRAINING (MERRTT) COURSE SET FOR OCTOBER**

The Modular Response Radiological transportation Training (MERRTT) Train-The-Trainer (TTT) will be held Tuesday, October 19 through Wednesday, October 20, 2004. The class is full, with 30 attendees signed up.

If funds are available, another course may be set for March of 2005. Enrollment will be open on a priority basis to those counties along the I-80 corridor, and those counties along or adjacent to State Highway 2. Counties that have radiological rail shipments on Union Pacific lines will be next on the priority list, followed by those counties with irradiator facilities, and finally those counties not along the corridor but which could use the training.

The location for the session is the Midtown Holiday Inn at 2503 South Locust Street in Grand Island. Class times will be daily from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

The course covers 18 modules, including DOE Shipments & Resources; Radiological Basics; Biological Effects; Hazard Recognition; Initial Response Actions; Radioactive Materials Shipping Package; Patient Handling; Radiological Terminology and Units; Incident Control; Radiological Survey Instruments and Dosimetry Devices; Assessing Package Integrity; Waste Isolation Pilot Plant; Decontamination, Disposal and Documentation; Transportation by Rail; Transportation of Safeguards Material; Pre-Hospital Practices; Incident Command; and Public Information Officer.

## NEMA'S AUGUST STATE ACADEMY DRAWS 39

### 20 Basic, 19 Advanced

Forty attendees filled the sessions for the August 2004 version of the Nebraska Emergency Management Basic and Advanced Academies, held the week of August 23.

A change of venue was a major development in this session, as the Academy was moved from the Law Enforcement Training Camp in Grand Island to the Holiday Inn in downtown Lincoln.

The Basic Academy was made up of students from a number of jurisdictions, including five from emergency management agencies, three NEMA staff members, six from other state agencies, two Army representatives, two from law enforcement, one health district representative and one from Metro Community College.

Making up the attendees in the Advanced Academy were 11 emergency management personnel, five from state agencies, and three from NEMA.



Once the exercise is done, it's time for the all-important hot wash.



Two teams in adjacent rooms take turns exercising emergency scenarios. One group functions as the exercise design team, controlling and evaluating the exercise. The other group are the players in the field, responding to the situation.

The move to Lincoln was precipitated by scheduling conflicts, and since most of the registered students were from within 60 miles of Lincoln, the decision was made to move the Academy.

This was the second incidence of what is referred to as the "combined" academy. Previous academies have consisted of separate courses for basic and advanced training. For this and the previous school NEMA has removed duplicated material, shortening the time required for instruction. This has eliminated two evening sessions and resulted in a smoother flow to the Academy.

## EVENTS AND REMINDERS

### LEOP Updates Should Be Kept Current --

The N.E.M.A. Planning Division reminds local jurisdictions that their Local Emergency Operating Plans should be updated on an annual basis, to make sure that they are compliant. If there are no changes required, documentation should be filed with N.E.M.A. stating that the plan is current and compliant as it stands. If changes are needed, they should be submitted as indicated in correspondence with the planners.

### Cooper Exercise Set for September 21st --

An Evaluated Plume exercise is scheduled for the Cooper Nuclear Station on September 21, 2004

### Ft. Calhoun Exercise Scheduled for October 26th --

A non-evaluated exercise is set for the Ft. Calhoun Station on Tuesday, October 26th.

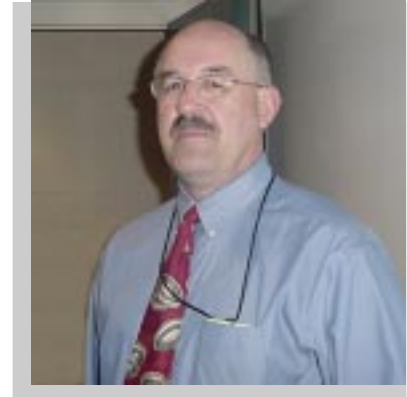
## FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR...

**27 August 2004**

**TO: Emergency Management Directors/Coordinators**

**FROM: Al Berndt**

**RE: SLA Program Status**



As you are aware, the program we have called State and Local Assistance (SLA) has been transferred from the direct control of FEMA over to the Department of Homeland Security, Office for Domestic Preparedness/State and Local Programs. As such we are in a holding period and at NEMA because we have received no guidance on how the program is going to be structured. Staff members from the FEMA Region VII Office have been in D.C. recently participating in meetings on program development. The only certainty is staff members from FEMA Regions will be administering the program this next year for ODP. As more information becomes available it will be distributed and printed in the Beacon. I personally anticipate the application period will be rather brief once we receive the guidelines.

For everyone currently participating in the SLA program, as we are now in the final quarter of activities, it is time to review your year-to-date activities and prepare to close out the grant reporting period. Please have all of your financial information together and ready for final submittal as I anticipate there will be additional monies available for distribution at the end of the grant cycle.

The Agency has been doing an overall assessment of the grant programs received from DHS, DOJ or FEMA over the past several years. There has truly been a multitude of funding opportunities available. Coupled with this has been an increase of responsibilities at the State and local level. I would strongly urge each local emergency manager to maintain an open dialogue with their county officials so there is a clear understanding of the programs, fiscal ramifications, level and detail of work involved, current grant and program status and reporting requirements involved to document and support program activities.

Recently there has been a change in emergency management leadership at the local level with one of the county programs. I have personally received several calls asking for or wanting clarification information on what transpired with the program. I would refer to my earlier statements, namely, that each of you work for your county supervisors and you need to keep them informed on program status. However, if problems develop at the program level and you are not able to correct those problems to adhere to the grant guidelines, then the supervisors will be contacted and asked to get the program back into compliance. The work each of us is being asked to do is too important to be approached in a haphazard way. The Lt. Governor often says this will be the most watched and audited Federal programs and money there ever has been and we collectively all need to be cognizant of this.

With all of the Federal grants and programs we have been working on and with the Federal Disaster Declaration, this has been a very busy summer. I would like to hope this fall would allow us to take a deep breath and catch up a little; however, with the changes in the SLA program, the National Infrastructure Protection Plan, National Incident Management System, Homeland Security Exercise Evaluation Program, Information Analysis Infrastructure Protection Vulnerability Assessments, State Homeland Security Grant Program, State Homeland Security Assessment Strategy Re-evaluation, Universal Task List and Target Capabilities List initiatives, the National Preparedness Strategy, and the list goes on, each of us needs to make sure we are comprehensively managing our time and efforts effectively.

I will be attending the National Emergency Management Association fall conference in New York City next month and I anticipate there will be new information coming out on all of the aforementioned initiatives. As new information becomes available and I come back from the conference, I will keep you updated.



# CASS COUNTY EPA EXERCISE MAKES BIG SPLASH

Real-time was the order of the day August 25th as the Cass County Emergency Management Agency sponsored a 2.5-hour functional exercise based on a HazMat scenario. The exercise was part of the EPA Omaha/Council Bluffs Sub-Area Contingency Plan process of which Cass, Sarpy, Douglas and Washington in Nebraska and Pottowatomie and Mills counties in Iowa are part.

This was a real time functional exercise involving a derailment on the BNSF Railroad at the foot of Main St. in Plattsmouth, caused by a terrorist group attempting to disrupt transportation. The scenario assumed a leak of 30,000 gallons of methyl mercaptan at that location at 0700 on Thursday morning causing the isolation of the Law Enforcement Center, closing of the Courthouse and City Hall and the evacuation of large areas of Plattsmouth and numerous injuries and fatalities.

The exercise played out 2.5 hours of realtime and primarily involved a test of command, control and communications. Primary players were Plattsmouth Fire Department and Rescue Squad at their mobile command post, (located at the EOC for convenience in the exercise), Offutt AFB Fire Department HazMat Unit, and the Cass County Emergency Operations Center and staff. Food for the exercise was sponsored by Ash Grove Cement Company in Louisville and was furnished by Gambin's Pizza, Louisville.

Seventy-eight personnel participated from forty-four entities as listed below:

## **Fire and Rescue**

Ashland FD  
Avoca FD/QRT  
Eagle RS  
Fremont FD  
Louisville FD/RS  
Manley FD  
Murray FD/RS  
Offutt AFB FD HazMat  
Plattsmouth FD/RS  
Springfield FD  
Weeping Water FD

## **Cities and Villages**

Plattsmouth (Mayor)  
Cedar Creek  
Louisville  
Manley (Chairman)  
South Bend (Chairman)  
Union (Chairman)  
Weeping Water (Mayor)  
Plattsmouth Water Dept.

## **Law Enforcement**

Cass County Sheriff's Office  
Plattsmouth PD  
Nebraska State Patrol

## **Federal and State Agencies**

US Environmental Protection Agency  
FEMA  
Nebraska HHS EMS  
Nebraska HHS Regulation and Licensure  
Nebraska Dept. of Environmental Quality  
Iowa Dept. of Natural Resources

## **Other Entities**

Salvation Army  
Omaha Metro Medical Response System  
Midlands Hospital  
Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad  
United Way of the Midlands  
McKinzie Environmental  
Twenty-first Century Systems  
Plattsmouth Journal  
Douglas County Community Health Center

## **Emergency Management Agencies**

Cass County EMA  
Mills County IA, EMA  
Pottowatomie County IA, EMA  
Sarpy County EMA

## **County Officials**

Cass County Commissioners (Allgayer, McManis)  
Cass County Attorney  
Sarpy/Cass Dept of Health and Wellness  
Douglas County Health Department



*Photos courtesy of Django Greenblatt-Seay, Plattsmouth Journal*

## RICHARDSON COUNTY VOLUNTEERS GET RECEPTION & CARE TRAINING

The Falls City Middle School gymnasium became a Reception and Care Facility for a few hours the night of August 17th, as volunteers gathered to take instruction in the process of evaluating and processing evacuees in the event of a nuclear power plant incident.

Those who would be moved out of the Emergency Planning Zone around the Cooper Nuclear Station in the event of a radiological incident would be instructed to report to the Falls City location to be accounted for and checked for contamination. This job would fall largely to Reception and Care volunteers.



The Richardson County Emergency Management Agency and representatives of the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency set up a reception station in the gym, with four lanes for testing. Workers got hands-on experience with detection equipment, practicing monitoring techniques on one another. They re-grouped again a few nights later to get more practice time, becoming familiar with the techniques and equipment.

## RED WILLOW COUNTY CONDUCTS NIGHT-LANDING TRAINING



MedStar Critical Care put on a show for the Red Willow County Emergency Management Agency and area first responders in August,

The instruction was aimed at providing the students with information and skills to assist helicopter medical transport crews in extracting victims.

Among the items covered were defining the landing zone, checking for and clearing obstructions, determining and communicating wind speed and direction and other elements of working with the airlift personnel.

Familiarization rides in the helicopter for first responders wrapped up the training session.

